

Memorandum

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CITY OF FLAGSTAFF



To: The Honorable Mayor and Council
From: Sara Dechter, AICP, Comprehensive Planning Manager
Co-Submitter: Roger Eastman, Zoning Code Administrator
Date: 09/17/2015
Meeting Date: 10/13/2015

TITLE:

Discussion of the proposed La Plaza Vieja Neighborhood Specific Plan

DESIRED OUTCOME:

Discussion of the proposed La Plaza Vieja Neighborhood Specific Plan in preparation for a public hearing on October 20th. Consideration of proposed replacement pages to address the condition of approval from the Planning and Zoning Commission.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The intent of the La Plaza Vieja Neighborhood Specific Plan (Specific Plan) is to provide a clear and comprehensive guide for compatible reinvestment that preserves and enhances the neighborhood character. Staff has worked closely with the neighborhood association, residents and property owners to find solutions to the challenges posed by regional transportation demands, entitlements in the Highway Commercial zone, and preservation of historic homes, affordable housing and neighborhood character. The Planning and Zoning Commission voted 4-1 to recommend approval with conditions of the Specific Plan to the City Council on September 23, 2015.

INFORMATION:

COUNCIL GOALS:

- 7) Address key issues and processes related to the implementation of the Regional Plan
- 8) Improve effectiveness of notification, communication, and engagement with residents, neighborhoods and businesses and about City services, programs, policies, projects and developments

REGIONAL PLAN:

- Goal LU.4. Balance housing and employment land uses with the preservation and protection of our unique natural and cultural setting.
- Goal LU.10. Increase the proportion of urban neighborhoods to achieve walkable, compact growth.
- Goal NH.1. Foster and maintain healthy and diverse urban, suburban, and rural neighborhoods in the Flagstaff region.
- Goal T.4. Promote transportation infrastructure and services that enhance the quality of life of the communities within the region.

BACKGROUND AND INFORMATION

The La Plaza Vieja Neighborhood Specific Plan (Specific Plan) is the first specific plan proposed since the 2005 Lone Tree Corridor Study was completed, and the first since the adoption of the Flagstaff Regional Plan 2030 (FRP30). Work on the Plan began in 2008, and paused in 2012 to allow FRP30 work to be completed.

SPECIFIC PLAN

The purpose of a Specific Plan is to provide a greater level of detail for a specific geographic area or element of the General Plan (FRP30), and to provide standards for the systematic implementation of the General Plan (City Code 11-10.30.010). The La Plaza Vieja Neighborhood Plan is warranted based on the need to respond to the “development and/or revitalization of unique character districts” (City Code 11-10.30.020).

The Specific Plan application includes all the elements required by City Code 11-10.30.030.D, including a Site and Area Analysis, Concept Plan, and a complete Specific Plan proposal with all required map and text elements. The Specific Plan will be incorporated by reference and will be added into FRP30 as part of a list of amendments on a new page following Page XV-6.

REGIONAL PLAN CONFORMANCE

The Specific Plan is in conformance with the Natural Environment, Built Environment, and Human Environment sections of FRP30. Most of the narrative material that usually accompanies a plan amendment is found in the Specific Plan, except for the narratives related to Regional Plan Conformance, potential impacts and community benefits, which can be found in the attachment, General Plan Amendment Narrative.

Specific plans conform to the City’s General Plan (FRP30), and can provide “measures required to insure the execution of the General Plan” (City Code 11-10.30.020 and 11-10.30.030). FRP30 contains more generalized policy statements than the Regional Land Use and Transportation Plan that preceded it. The vision of the document for future development of land uses included specific plans being produced on a regular basis to inform the development review process for a particular topic or area. FRP30 envisioned several purposes for specific plans:

- “land designations for future growth patterns, and the Future Growth Illustrations (Maps 21 and 22) identify the area types of urban, suburban, and rural character. It is expected that more detailed plans, specific plans for activity centers, public facility planning, and neighborhood plans will define the context and particulars for development, reinvestment, and conservation” (FRP30 p. IX-2).
- “The City and County use area plans, neighborhood plans, and area specific plans to create design standards based on community input” (FRP30 p. VIII-19).
- Corridor Plans (Policy LU.19.1)

The La Plaza Vieja Specific Plan implements FRP30 within the first two purposes and provides information that can be integrated into later corridor studies relevant to this planning area. As a freestanding document included in FRP30 by reference, the Specific Plan keeps project specific information out of the general policy document and keeps it organized together in a single place.

In the La Plaza Vieja Neighborhood, the FRP30 policies supporting increased regional transportation connectivity and growth of activity centers are in conflict with policies that promote the preservation of community character, neighborhoods and historic districts. The Specific Plan’s goal is to clarify how these policies can be implemented in a compatible and unified way, while acknowledging the need for flexibility in making future trade-offs. This will ensure that there is clarity and consistency in how City decisions in this area implement FRP30. One way this is accomplished is by bringing in FRP30 an goals and policies that are most relevant and should be more heavily weighted in this area than other factors. On Page 49, the Specific Plan states, “If an FRP30 goal or policy is tied to a goal in the Specific Plan, then it should be weighted more heavily in future decision-making than a goal that is not listed in this chapter. The exception to this is if a Corridor Plan for South Milton Road or Route 66 comes to a different conclusion than the Specific Plan, then that Corridor Plan would take precedence in transportation and infrastructure decisions.” This goal is also accomplished by providing multiple streetscape scenarios that take into account possible future conditions in the Concept Plan (See Specific Plan pages 30-36).

PROPOSITION 207

Adoption of a Specific Plan will not trigger successful Proposition 207 claims because specific plans are

not land use laws and do not change existing zoning entitlements.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Notes, agendas, and a narrative of how public comments were considered are provided in the attached Public Participation Report. There is a separate attachment for a Summary of Commission Recommendations. The neighborhood and community were involved in the update of the neighborhood plan in number ways during the past year:

- 1) The La Plaza Vieja Neighborhood Association (LPVNA) had representatives who were involved in the core team for all phases of the project. Staff also gave monthly updates at the LPVNA meetings on the 1st Wednesday of every month.
 - 2) A November kick-off public meeting informed the public about the process and involved the public in identifying the scope of the update. These meetings were not intended to reinvent the document entirely but to build on past collaborative efforts. For instance, the planning boundary was an area of agreement among the participants and was therefore not reconsidered as part of the project scope (See Boundary description attachment for more details.)
 - 3) In January, the City held two workshops and one open house to discuss major policy issues and to provide feedback on a first draft of the updated concept plan.
 - 4) The Planning and Zoning Commission reviewed a pre-public review draft of the plan at an April 2015 work session.
 - 5) A draft of the updated Specific Plan was made available in May 2015 for approximately 60 days prior to the first Planning and Zoning Commission Hearing to allow adequate time for public review and comment to be incorporated. During these 60 days, the neighborhood association convened a neighborhood meeting and the City held a public meeting at the Old Town Springs Park and a working session with the City Council.
 - 6) The Planning and Zoning Commission held a work session and two public hearings, one at City Hall and one at the Flagstaff Aquaplex in August and September 2015. During this timeframe, staff also presented the Specific Plan to the Transportation Commission, Bicycle Advisory Committee, Pedestrian Advisory Committee, and Heritage Preservation Commission, all of whom recommended the Plan for adoption. All conditions that were part of commission motions prior to September 23 were incorporated into the draft presented to the Planning and Zoning Commission as part of the hearing on that date.
- The Planning and Zoning Commission's motion to recommend the La Plaza Vieja Neighborhood Specific Plan to City Council for approval included a condition for the modification of a new boundary line between the Transition Area and Commercial Edge to be drawn by staff with input from the interested parties along with any modifications to policies necessary to support a new boundary. The Transition Area and Commercial Edge are neighborhood policy areas identified on page 26-27 of the Plan. Staff met with members of the public who commented on the boundary on Wednesday, September 30, 2015 and amended the Transition Area boundary to include more properties along South Malpais Lane and the west end of Clay Ave and an additional property along Blackbird Roost. These changes expanded the regional scale activity center's core, and better accounted for changes in access that may result from a McCracken Street Extension. Several policies and implementation strategies under Goal 6 were moved, added, or changed based on the new boundary. Proposed replacement pages are attached to this staff report.
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Attachments: [La Plaza Vieja Neighborhood Specific Plan - September 17, 2015 version](#)
[Proposed Replacement Pages to address a new Transition Area boundary - October 1, 2015](#)
[General Plan Amendment Narrative](#)
[Specific Plan Boundary Description](#)
[Public Participation Report](#)
[Summary of Commission Recommendations](#)
[Comment from Garrett B Schniewind on behalf of Canyon Explorations](#)